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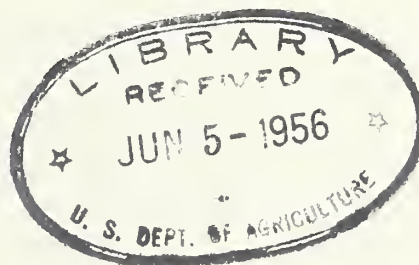
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Unemployment and Partial Employment

of hired farm workers
in cotton areas

Comparison of selected areas
in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana,
and New Mexico and detailed
analysis of Cordele, Georgia,
area.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Research Service
and
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Bureau of Employment Security

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Production Economics Research Branch
Agricultural Research Service
United States Department of Agriculture

PREFACE

Cooperative surveys were conducted in 1952 by the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Employment Security, U. S. Department of Labor, in regard to the employment of hired farm workers in four cotton areas. A summary report entitled "Unemployment and Partial Employment of Hired Farm Workers in Four Areas," was published by the cooperating agencies in April 1953. Detailed reports have since been published in regard to three of the areas. These are:

Unemployment and Partial Employment of Hired Farm Workers in Roswell and Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952. (Published in April 1954.)

Unemployment and Partial Employment of Hired Farm Workers in Selected Areas of Louisiana. (Published in June 1954.)

Unemployment of Hired Farm Workers in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, May, 1952. (Published in August 1954.)

The present publication is the last in the series. It includes a brief comparison of the findings in the four areas and a detailed analysis of employment of hired farm workers in Cordele, Ga.

A number of persons in both agencies contributed to the planning of the surveys, the fieldwork, and the analysis of findings. General direction of the surveys was provided in the Department of Agriculture by Margaret Jarman Hagood and Louis J. Ducoff, now of the Farm Population and Rural Life Branch, Agricultural Marketing Service; and in the Department of Labor by Louis Levine, E. D. Vinogradoff, and William Mirengoff of the Reports and Analysis Division, Bureau of Employment Security. Acknowledgment is made of the services of Willis F. Sloan and James G. Gray, Farm Placement Service, Bureau of Employment Security, in formulating the objectives of these surveys and in facilitating field operations. In the Department of Agriculture, Eleanor M. Birch, of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Joe R. Motheral, Production Economics Research Branch, Agricultural Research Service, Paul P. Wallrabenstein, Special Farm Statistics Branch, Agricultural Marketing Service, and in the Department of Labor, Lester Rindler, Reports and Analysis Division, Bureau of Employment Security, contributed substantially to the development of statistical data and the plan of analysis. Field-survey operations were conducted under the direction of State agricultural statisticians in each State--Georgia, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico--in consultation with State and local employment service offices. Preparation of this report was the responsibility of personnel in the Production Economics Research Branch, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND PARTIAL EMPLOYMENT OF HIRED FARM WORKERS IN COTTON AREAS

Comparison of Selected Areas in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana,
and New Mexico, and Detailed Analysis of Cordele,
Georgia, Area

By

William H. Metzler, Labor Economist
Production Economics Research Branch
Agricultural Research Service

RESULTS OF SURVEYS IN FOUR AREAS

Comparison of the results of studies in four areas of utilization of local off-farm supplies of agricultural labor provides data as to the composition of local supplies of farm labor. It shows also the patterns of employment of workers who engage in seasonal farm labor. All field surveys were made at approximately the same time--May 1952. Only farm workers in households in urban centers were interviewed. This was done to measure the utilization of the local seasonal and supplementary work force, rather than farm operators and their regular farm employees. Although the surveys were made in only 4 areas and for only 1 year, the results have significance for similar areas and for other years.

Cotton was the major labor-using crop in each of the four areas, and local farm-employment patterns were molded by the seasonal labor needs for this crop. In all areas, however, some minor crops also called for seasonal workers. These crops affected the length of local work seasons.

Differences in adequacy of local labor supplies were known to exist at the time of the surveys. An industrial flurry in the Georgia area had recently drawn some workers away from the local pool of farm labor. Local farm workers had been supplemented in the Georgia area, and in the Arkansas and New Mexico areas, by migratory or imported labor at the peak of the harvest season. The Louisiana area was one of labor surplus and it supplied some migrant or day-haul workers to adjacent areas, as did also the New Mexico area.

The number of households and farm workers covered in the survey, and the major agricultural products in the survey areas, were as follows:

<u>Survey area</u>	<u>Survey households</u> (number)	<u>Farm workers</u> (number)	<u>Major farm products</u>
Pine Bluff, Ark.-----	204	349	Cotton, corn, lespedeza, rice
Cordele, Ga.-----	189	354	Cotton, corn, peanuts, vegetables
Opelousas and nearby towns, La.-----	210	391	Cotton, corn, peanuts, soybeans, sweetpotatoes
Roswell and Artesia, N. Mex.-----	92	165	Cotton, alfalfa, live- stock, vegetables

Composition of Local Farm Labor Force

In the Georgia, Arkansas, and Louisiana survey areas, workers in the local off-farm labor force were Negroes--mostly women and youth. Adult male workers had almost disappeared from the seasonal farm labor market (fig. 1). They preferred nonfarm employment, and they left seasonal farm work as rapidly as opportunity permitted. However, women and children continued to do seasonal farm work. In the New Mexico area, workers were largely Spanish-Americans, and the pattern of labor-force participation was substantially different from the patterns in the other areas. Adult males still predominated, whereas women were much less important numerically.

Percentages of adult males, adult females, and workers under 20 in the farm labor force in the survey areas were as follows:

	<u>Males over 19 years old (percent)</u>	<u>Females over 19 years old (percent)</u>	<u>Workers under 20 years old (percent)</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	15	56	29
Georgia - - - - -	14	43	43
Louisiana - - - - -	21	37	42
New Mexico - - - - -	47	21	32

Position in the Local Labor Market

Approximately two-thirds of the farm workers in the survey areas worked in agriculture only. These workers usually were housewives or school youth who retired from the labor market when the seasonal farm tasks were over. When farm employment was slack, however, women in Cordele, Ga., and Opelousas, La., frequently engaged in domestic service work. Among Negro workers, adult males usually shifted to nonfarm employment. This was less true among Spanish-American workers.

The percentage of farm workers who did farm work only was as follows for male heads of households, wives and female heads of households, and other workers:

	<u>Male heads of households (percent)</u>	<u>Wives and female heads of households (percent)</u>	<u>Other workers (percent)</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	30	84	80
Georgia - - - - -	27	57	75
Louisiana - - - - -	36	55	74
New Mexico - - - - -	46	80	72

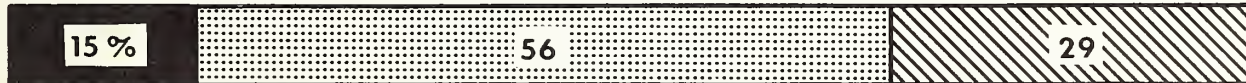
SEASONAL FARM LABOR FORCE

Southeastern Compared with Southwestern Cotton Areas

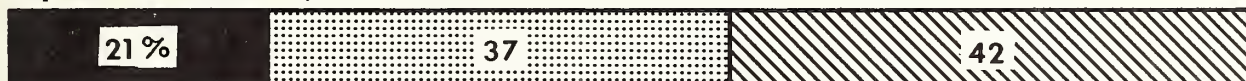
Cordele, Ga.



Pine Bluff, Ark.



Opelousas Area, La.



Roswell & Artesia New Mexico



■ Adult males

▤ Adult females

▨ Youth *

* UNDER 20 YEARS OLD. DATA AS OF MAY 1952. FIGURES ARE PERCENT OF TOTAL SEASONAL FARM LABOR FORCE.

Figure 1.--Adult males have largely disappeared from the seasonal hired farm labor force in some southeastern cotton areas.

Practically all the farm work done by the labor force in the survey areas was of a seasonal or short-term nature. In New Mexico, however, 12 percent of the workers had farm employment for more than 40 weeks of the year preceding the survey. It is unlikely that all this work consisted of hoeing or harvest tasks.

Employment in the 12 Months Preceding the Interviews

The employment these workers obtained in the year preceding the interviews depended largely on the time required for local seasonal farm operations, and on the demand for nonfarm workers in the slack season in agriculture. Many workers confined their employment to cotton chopping and cotton picking, but adult male workers were able to obtain additional farm employment at plowing and cultivating at a time when wives were doing housework and children were in school. Workers in New Mexico lengthened the farm work season by migrating to adjacent areas to work in cotton.

Some of the workers interviewed had left agriculture. For others, nonfarm work was becoming the major occupation. Male heads of households in Louisiana spent more weeks in nonfarm than in farm work, and those in Arkansas and Georgia spent about an equal amount of time in the two types of work.

Total weeks worked at farm and at nonfarm employment in the 12 months preceding the interviews were as follows:

<u>Male heads of households</u>		<u>Wives and female heads of households</u>		<u>Other workers</u>	
Farm work (weeks)	Non- farm work (weeks)	Farm work (weeks)	Non- farm work (weeks)	Farm work (weeks)	Non- farm work (weeks)
Arkansas --- 18	17	19	14	20	5
Georgia ---- 22	20	14	12	12	5
Louisiana -- 13	19	11	13	10	5
New Mexico - 30	11	18	5	25	5

Unemployment in the 12 Months Preceding the Interviews

Seasonality of cotton and other farm operations in the survey areas resulted in highly irregular employment. The proportion of workers unemployed was low in the cotton-chopping and cotton-picking seasons, but it was high both in the summer lay-by period and in winter. The high point of unemployment in Arkansas was August (30 percent); in Georgia, July (13 percent); in Louisiana, January, June, July, and December (36 percent); and in New Mexico, March (42 percent).

The percentage of workers unemployed at 4 different periods of the year illustrates the difference in seasonality among the 4 areas.

	<u>January</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>April</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>July</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>October</u> <u>(percent)</u>
Arkansas -----	18	25	4	0
Georgia -----	8	3	13	1
Louisiana -----	36	21	36	9
New Mexico -----	17	40	7	2

Total unemployment reported by workers in Georgia for the year preceding the interviews was relatively low. Twenty percent of the male heads of households reported unemployment at some time in the year, but these periods generally totaled not more than 8 weeks. In Arkansas, 54 percent of the male heads of households reported unemployment at some time in the year, but usually it was for a short period only. Male heads of households in Louisiana reported more protracted unemployment. Approximately half were unemployed at some time in the year, and 20 percent were unemployed for a total of 25 weeks or more. In New Mexico, the rate and length of unemployment were similar to those in Arkansas.

The extent of unemployment reported by women and children was considerably less, as they retired from the labor market when the work season was over. The percentage of workers who reported unemployment at any time in the year, and the percentage who were unemployed a total of more than 4 weeks, was as follows:

Percentage unemployed
at some time during year

	<u>Male heads</u> <u>of</u> <u>households</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>Wives and</u> <u>female heads</u> <u>of households</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>Other</u> <u>workers</u> <u>(percent)</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	54	11	37
Georgia - - - - -	20	7	13
Louisiana - - - - -	48	22	56
New Mexico - - - - -	56	13	51

Percentage unemployed
for longer than 4 weeks

	<u>Male heads</u> <u>of</u> <u>households</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>Wives and</u> <u>female heads</u> <u>of households</u> <u>(percent)</u>	<u>Other</u> <u>workers</u> <u>(percent)</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	33	6	22
Georgia - - - - -	12	6	11
Louisiana - - - - -	46	14	34
New Mexico - - - - -	44	7	19

Partial Employment in 2 Selected Weeks

Employment of farm workers was not always continuous, even in periods of active agricultural operations. The extent of employment was checked in detail for the 2 weeks in May just prior to the survey. Although these 2 weeks came in the cotton-chopping season, workers in Georgia and New Mexico who had jobs were unemployed approximately 20 percent of the time, those in Louisiana a third of the time, and those in Arkansas almost half the time.

Potential days of work, at 5 days a week for the 2-week period, and actual days worked were as follows:

	Potential days of work (number)	Actual days worked (percent)	Workdays lost (percent)
Arkansas - - - - -	10	5.6	44
Georgia - - - - -	10	8.0	20
Louisiana - - - - -	10	6.7	33
New Mexico - - - - -	10	8.1	19

These figures do not include the time of workers who did no work at all in this period. They do include days lost because of "personal" reasons, such as housework or illness. Personal reasons accounted for a major part of the loss of time in Georgia, but they were not reported as a major factor in the other areas.

The comparative loss of time among the four areas is not as important as the fact that employment of farm workers is irregular, even in the active period of the year. Special local conditions, such as extent of rainfall and the stage of chopping operations, could easily result in temporary differences between areas.

Earnings in the Year Preceding the Interviews

Average earnings per worker for the year were highest in New Mexico, partly because more of the workers were adult males and partly because some were skilled workers. Average earnings per worker were as follows:

	<u>All workers</u>	<u>Male heads of households</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	\$494	\$ 827
Georgia - - - - -	472	1,157
Louisiana - - - - -	359	703
New Mexico - - - - -	909	1,256

Average earnings per day were highly variable. This was especially true for nonfarm work, as the averages in some areas were reduced by low rates of pay to domestic service workers. Average earnings per day were as follows:

	<u>Farm work</u>	<u>Nonfarm work</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	\$4.62	\$4.99
Georgia - - - - -	4.80	3.95
Louisiana - - - - -	4.41	3.40
New Mexico - - - - -	5.36	7.83

A rough approximation of the number of days worked in the 12 months preceding the interviews can be derived by dividing average annual earnings of the workers by average estimated earnings per day. Results are as follows:

	<u>All workers</u> <u>(number)</u>	<u>Days worked</u> <u>Male heads of households</u> <u>(number)</u>
Arkansas - - - - -	105	139
Georgia - - - - -	108	187
Louisiana - - - - -	92	134
New Mexico - - - - -	155	201

Hence, many of the weeks of work reported must have been only partial weeks.

Availability for More Work

More than a fourth of the workers in the survey areas reported availability for additional employment at some time in the year. The proportion varied rather closely from area to area with the amount of unemployment reported in the 12 months preceding the interviews. Lowest availability was in Georgia, where only 15 percent of the male workers reported any unemployment in the previous year, and only 11 percent said they would be available for additional employment. The proportion of women who were available was more than 3 times as great.

Greatest availability for additional work was reported in Arkansas and New Mexico where unemployment was greatest. More than a fourth of the males and almost half of the females said they were available for more work. The high availability of Spanish-American women was remarkable in light of their low rate of participation in the labor force.

More workers reported availability for nonfarm than for farm work, but many indicated that they would accept either. Despite the rather high

availability for local employment, only a few workers were willing to work away from home. The proportion was highest in New Mexico, where a third of the workers had done migratory work in the previous year.

Percentages of all workers 16 to 60 years old who would be available for additional work at some time in the year were as follows: ^{1/}

	<u>Local farm work</u>		<u>Local nonfarm work</u>		<u>Nonlocal farm work</u>	
	<u>Male</u> (percent)	<u>Female</u> (percent)	<u>Male</u> (percent)	<u>Female</u> (percent)	<u>Male</u> (percent)	<u>Female</u> (percent)
Arkansas -----	26	41	29	34	6	4
Georgia -----	6	23	11	30	0	4
Louisiana -----	27	23	32	23	5	2
New Mexico ----	25	38	28	47	12	9

Workers in Georgia, Arkansas, and Louisiana reported greatest availability for work from April to September. This was due largely to the preponderance of women and children, who regarded themselves as out of the labor market for the rest of the year. In New Mexico, workers reported greatest availability for the slack season, January to March.

THE CORDELE, GA., AREA

In the spring of 1952 there was general concern as to whether the manpower resources of the Nation were adequate to meet all production needs. Concern was especially great in farming areas in which seasonal labor demands were high. Consequently, the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Employment Security, U. S. Department of Labor, conducted four local studies in cotton-producing areas to ascertain the extent to which seasonal farm workers were utilized in those areas, and whether they might be seasonally available for other work. The areas studied were Cordele, Ga.; Pine Bluff, Ark.; Opelousas and surrounding towns, La.; and Roswell and Artesia, N. Mex.

Information was obtained from a sample of the farm workers in these areas in regard to their employment and earnings in the 12 months preceding the interviews in May 1952, the extent and seasonality of their

^{1/} Percentages in the 4 detailed reports are higher than those shown here. The former were based on workers 16 to 60 years old who expected less than 10 months of employment; these are based on all workers 16 to 60 years old.

unemployment, and their availability for work in periods of unemployment. The survey area in Georgia was Cordele, a trade center of approximately 10,000 population, in the southwestern part of the State. Nearby defense projects, including the defense installation in the Augusta-Aiken area, the Warner Robins Air Force Base near Macon, the Marine base near Albany, and Moody Field at Valdosta, were draining farm workers away from Cordele. In addition, a local manufacturing plant had been awarded a defense contract and had greatly expanded its work force.

The major farm labor need in the area is for workers to chop and pick cotton, but workers are also needed to handle seasonal operations in peanuts, pecans, peaches, melons, and other crops. The total local labor force is not large; it quickly shows the effects of additional demands from nonfarm sources.

Summary

The Cordele survey portrays the utilization of farm workers who live in a population center (1) of limited size and limited supplies of manpower, (2) close enough to large defense installations so that some manpower had been attracted away, and (3) in which industrial and business activity was expanding. The survey covered 354 persons in Cordele who had done some farm work in the year preceding the interviews. No data are available on the number and types of workers who shifted into nonfarm employment, but by May 1952, when the survey was made, approximately 6 out of 7 farm workers in the Cordele survey area were women or youth.

Most of the women were housewives who were in the labor market only in periods of high farm labor needs. School youth also worked for a short time only. Almost two-thirds of the workers were out of the labor market in the slack season of the year.

Despite the fact that only 87 percent of the workers covered in the survey were employed at the peak work season and only 33 percent in the slack months, those available were almost fully employed. On an average, they reported being unemployed for only 1 week of the year preceding the interviews.

Unemployment was highest in June and July when 7 percent of the workers were looking for work. The percentage dwindled to 1 percent in the cotton-chopping season and to zero in the cotton-picking season. It rose to 3 percent in winter.

Unemployment was reported most frequently by male heads of households, and by sons and daughters 16 years of age and over. One of 5 or 6 of these workers had experienced some unemployment in the year preceding the interviews, though ordinarily for not more than 8 weeks of the year.

Nearly all the workers were seasonal workers. Only 8 had worked at farm jobs more than 9 months in the year preceding the interviews. Their work was intermittent also. Those who worked less than 17 weeks ordinarily had 2 different periods of employment and averaged more than 5 farm jobs each during the year, whereas those who worked more than 17 weeks had 4 periods of employment and averaged more than 9 jobs. No comparable tabulation was made of the number of nonfarm jobs.

A closer look at the employment of the workers covered in the survey was obtained through a detailed statement of their work in the 2 weeks immediately preceding the interviews. During this period, only 25 percent did any farm work. Forty-four percent of those who did farm work were employed the entire time. Of the 56 percent who worked less than full time, half worked 1 to 7 days, and the other half worked either 8 or 9 days. A 4-day week was common among women workers. Underutilization of the time of those people who did farm work in the 2 weeks amounted to approximately 20 percent.

The workers earned an average of \$472 from farm and nonfarm employment in the year preceding the interviews. Male heads of households, however, had average earnings of \$1,157, whereas sons 16 and over earned an average of \$826. Wives had average earnings of \$395, and children \$175. Approximately 30 percent of all earnings were from nonfarm work; male heads of households had 40 percent of their earnings from nonfarm work, sons over 16 had 60 percent, and wives had 20 percent.

Earnings per day averaged \$4.60; for the group as a whole during the year, the average was \$4.80 for farm and \$3.95 for nonfarm work. Earnings from nonfarm work were particularly variable. More than a third of the nonfarm jobs held by male heads of households paid \$6 or more a day; 80 percent paid \$4 or more. But a third of the jobs reported by women paid less than \$2 a day and only 10 percent paid more than \$4. Much of this difference was due to low rates of pay for domestic service.

Earnings from farm work varied almost as much, but at a somewhat higher level. Very few workers reported jobs that paid less than \$2 a day, while half paid \$2 to \$4. More than a third of the jobs reported by male heads of households paid \$8 or more a day.

Half of the workers 16 to 60 years of age expected to work less than 10 months in the coming year. All except 14 of these workers were women. Approximately half of those who expected to work less than 10 months said they would be available for more work. More would be available in spring and summer than at other seasons of the year. Greatest preference was for local nonfarm work, but almost as many were willing to do more local farm work. Very few said they would be available for farm work away from home.

In terms of percentages, approximately 11 percent of the men between 16 and 60 years of age and 35 percent of the women would be available for additional farm or nonfarm work in the Cordele area in the coming year.

Labor Situation, Cordele, Ga.

The survey records were obtained in the city of Cordele, Ga., which is a major trading center and source of seasonal labor for farmers in Crisp and adjoining counties. According to the 1950 Census, 2/ Cordele had a population of 9,462 persons, almost half of whom were Negroes. Normally, the Negroes constitute a pool of labor which is drawn on for seasonal farm work and for other types of semiskilled or unskilled jobs. Some do farm work only, but others divide their time among seasonal farm work, domestic service, and casual labor jobs in town.

Job opportunities in industry increased significantly in the Cordele area for several years preceding the survey. A Cordele machine company, which was awarded a defense contract, led in the local expansion. Increased business activity caused other manufacturing and business concerns in the area to increase their activities and labor demands. By 1952, two-thirds of all hired employment in the area had become nonagricultural. 3/

The favorable employment situation in Cordele at the time of the survey no longer exists. In March 1954, the Cordele area was placed on the list of labor-market areas with a substantial surplus of labor. In May 1954, the Bureau of Employment Security, U. S. Department of Labor, reported on the situation in the Cordele area as follows: 4/

Significant employment declines in ordnance, trade, and service were the principal causes in a drop of over 700 in nonfarm employment between March 1953 and March 1954. Ordnance payrolls alone were cut in half over the year as activities at an artillery shell factory were curtailed... Unemployment totaled about 1,500 (8 percent of the labor force) in March 1954, approximately triple the March 1953 figure... Completion of present contracts is scheduled to cause further sizable cuts in ordnance during the next few months.

2/ United States Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population: 1950. Volume ii, Characteristics of the Population; Part 11, Georgia. Washington. 1952. (See p. 36.)

3/ Data in regard to the local employment situation at the time of the survey were supplied by the Cordele office of the Georgia State Employment Service.

4/ United States Bureau of Employment Security. Bimonthly Summary of Labor Market Developments in Major Areas. 44 pp., May 1954. (Processed.) (See p. 16.)

The data obtained in the Cordele survey, then, portray the employment situation in an area of limited manpower resources during a temporary boom period.

Inroads on the supply of farm labor were so severe that in 1951 farmers in an adjoining county contracted for 275 Mexican Nationals to help in the cotton harvest.

By May 1952, the seasonal farm labor pool in Cordele was composed largely of women and children. Men looked on cotton chopping and cotton picking with disfavor; they took other employment when the opportunity arose. Ordinarily, however, women could earn more money at farm than at nonfarm work. They readily quit domestic service jobs to engage in farm work.

Cotton is still the major labor-using crop in the area. An estimated 1,350 workers are required for cotton chopping and 3,000 for the cotton harvest (fig. 2). Peanuts are the next most important labor-using crop. This crop requires workers at approximately the same periods as cotton. About 500 workers are required in the hoeing season, and 1,400 workers are needed to harvest the peanuts. Labor requirements for sweetpotatoes are also competitive with cotton and peanuts, but the number of workers needed is not so large. Peach, melon, pecan, and corn operations provide a limited amount of farm employment in periods when activity in the three major crops is slight.

Census data indicate a gradual change in labor-use patterns in agriculture in this area. The number of farms (and farm-operating families) in Crisp County declined 13 percent from 1945 to 1950, 5/ and 28 percent from 1930 to 1950. 6/ This decline was due largely to a reduction in the number of sharecroppers, but the decreases were not matched by increases in the use of hired labor. Obviously, mechanized equipment is performing some tasks that formerly were done by hand labor. Mechanical harvesters are not used as yet, but reductions in labor use have been made in such operations as breaking land, planting, and cultivating. This type of mechanization increases the seasonality of labor needs.

5/ United States Bureau of the Census. United States Census of Agriculture: 1950. Volume i, Counties and State Economic Areas; Part 17, Georgia. 392 pp., illus. Washington. 1952. (See pp. 58-59.)

6/ United States Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Agriculture. Volume iii, Type of Farm; Part 2, The Southern States. 1125 pp., illus. Washington. 1932. (See pp. 340-341.)

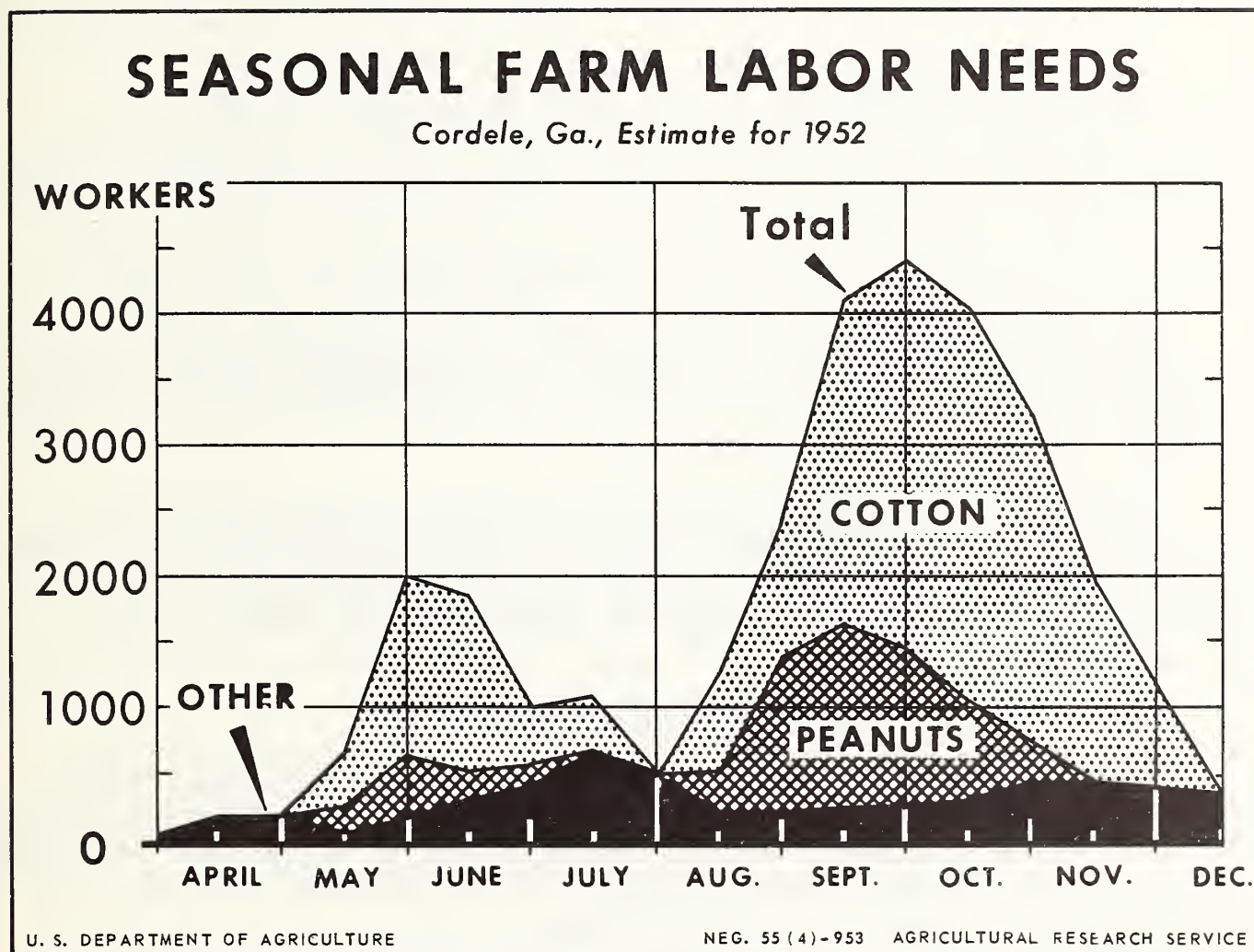


Figure 2.--There are two peaks in seasonal farm labor needs in the Cordele area, one at cotton chopping and the other at cotton harvesting time.

The result of these changes in the cropping pattern is that farm labor needs are heavy for only about a month in spring and about 3 or 4 months in fall. Farm workers must find other employment for the major part of the year. If they can find continuous employment in other lines, they are not likely to return to intermittent jobs in agriculture.

Seasonal workers ordinarily are recruited by crew leaders who pick the workers up at their homes each morning and transport them to their work. Crew leaders work in close cooperation with the local office of the State employment service in meeting farm labor needs.

Despite the expanded industrial activity, unemployment in the Cordele area was estimated by local employment service officials as "about normal for this time of the year." More than 200 persons had claims for unemployment insurance at the local office at the end of April. An additional 150 persons had exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits; probably they were still unemployed. Most of the people in the latter group were older women who had little chance to get new jobs.

These figures were only partly offset by unfilled job openings at the local office. Openings were largely for laborers and domestic service workers, but carpenters, sewing machine operators, machinists, and other skilled workers were wanted also.

Comparable data are not available for the number of farm workers unemployed at the time of survey. May is a month of high spring activity. Cotton chopping is in full swing but spring operations do not require a large number of workers, as compared with the harvest season. (See figure 2.)

Characteristics of Workers

Households in the survey area in Cordele were comparatively large, and they had a larger than usual number of workers. The average size of household was 4.4 persons, and the average number of workers per household was 2.5. These averages compare roughly with the national average of 3.3 persons and 1.8 workers per household. ^{7/}

The figure on workers per household in the United States is not strictly comparable with the Cordele data. The latter consists of persons

^{7/} United States Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, Ser. P-20, No. 44, 20 pp. 1953. (Processed.) (See p. 3.)

who did any work in the year preceding the interviews; the Census data include all persons who did any work in a selected week in June, the month of highest employment.

Effects of the rise in industrial labor demands were readily observable in the Cordele survey group. Female workers in the survey households outnumbered male workers by 18 percent. Among workers who engaged in farm work, females outnumbered males almost 2 to 1 (fig. 3). Of the males who did farm work, a third were under 14, and almost two-thirds were under 20 (table 1). Consequently, three-fourths of the adult farm workers were women. But of those workers who did nonfarm work only, 78 percent were males.

Only 11 percent of the women restricted their employment to non-farm work. Apparently, in this area, seasonal farm work has become the special province of women and children.

Workers in the survey group were practically all seasonal rather than the regular or year-round type. Three-fourths had engaged in farm work for periods amounting to 4 months or less in the year preceding the interviews. Only 8 persons had worked longer than 40 weeks at farm work. Workers in town apparently were called on only to meet peak-season labor needs.

Most of the workers were employed at farm work for a period of 5 to 16 weeks (table 2), which was long enough to cover employment in both cotton chopping and cotton picking. Workers in this group were largely wives, female heads of households, and children under 16. Workers who were employed longer ordinarily had other farm jobs in addition to these two most common operations. About a third of the workers had additional jobs.

Approximately 1 worker in 8 worked less than 5 weeks. Of these workers, approximately half were under 18 years of age; the rest were largely adult women. Among the youth, boys and girls were about equal in number. Practically all these short-time workers did farm work only.

In the group that did farm work for 17 weeks or longer, male heads of households, wives, and female heads of households were almost equal in number. More than 90 percent of these people shifted between farm and nonfarm work. Apparently they spent about as much time at seasonal farm work as the season permitted. In the slack period they took nonfarm jobs. Very few of the children under 16, or sons 16 and over, did farm work for as long as 17 weeks.

In Cordele, Ga.

SEASONAL FARM LABOR FORCE



ADULT MALE

14 %



ADULT FEMALE

43 %



YOUTH *

43 %

* UNDER 20 YEARS OLD. DATA AS OF MAY 1952. FIGURES ARE PERCENT OF TOTAL SEASONAL FARM LABOR FORCE

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Figure 3.--Women and youth each made up 43 percent of the seasonal farm labor force in the Cordele area.

Table 1. - Number and percentage distribution of workers in 189 survey households, by type of work, length of farm employment, and age and sex of workers, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Group	Persons in each group	Proportion of workers who were	
		Male	Female
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
All persons in survey households:	826	100	---
All workers-----	480	58	46
Farm workers-----	354	43	34
All workers-----	480	100	46
Farm work only-----	222	46	32
Mostly farm work-----	48	10	40
Mostly nonfarm work-----	84	18	39
Nonfarm work only-----	126	26	78
All farm workers-----	354	100	34
Length of farm employment:			
1-4 weeks-----	45	13	49
5-16 weeks-----	206	58	32
17 weeks or more-----	103	29	33
Age:			
Under 14-----	67	19	61
14-19-----	85	24	39
20-34-----	68	19	25
35-54-----	95	27	17
55-64-----	17	5	35
65 and over-----	22	6	41

Table 2. - Length of farm employment of farm workers in the 12 months preceding the interviews, by sex, age, and position in household, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Item	Total farm workers		Length of farm employment							
			1-4 weeks		5-16 weeks		17 weeks or more ^{1/}			
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.		
Total farm workers-----	354	100	45	13	206	58	103	29		
Sex:										
Male-----	122	100	22	18	66	54	34	28		
Female-----	232	100	23	10	140	60	69	30		
Age:										
Under 18-----	135	100	21	15	94	70	20	15		
18-24-----	37	100	5	14	20	54	12	32		
25-44-----	87	100	3	4	49	56	35	40		
45-64-----	73	100	9	12	32	44	32	44		
65 and over-----	22	100	7	32	11	50	4	18		
Position in household:										
Male heads of households-----	41	100	4	10	15	36	22	54		
Female heads of households-----	55	100	9	16	26	47	20	37		
Wives-----	77	100	6	8	49	64	22	28		
Sons, 16 and over-----	17	100	3	18	11	64	3	18		
Daughters, 16 and over-----	31	100	2	6	16	52	13	42		
Children under 16-----	87	100	15	17	61	70	11	13		
Others-----	46	100	6	13	28	61	12	26		

^{1/} Group includes 8 workers who were employed for more than 40 weeks.

The educational level of the farm workers in the sample was somewhat lower than for the population of Cordele as a whole, but it was higher than the average for Negroes in Crisp County. According to the Census of 1950, ^{8/} the median grade of school completed by adults in Cordele was 7.7, whereas the median grade for Negroes in Crisp County was 4.2. The median grade completed by farm workers 18 years old and over in this survey was 5.6. Males averaged approximately one grade less than females. Differences on an occupational basis were greater for males than for females. Male workers in nonfarm employment averaged several grades higher than those who engaged only in farm work.

Employment and Other Activities of Workers,
May 1951 - May 1952

Each worker interviewed was asked to account for each week of the year preceding the interviews. This task was simplified by counting 4 weeks to a month; hence, the results are in terms of 48 weeks instead of 52. This method of accounting for the work year was somewhat rough, but it served to indicate the general amount of employment, unemployment, and other activities of members of the survey group.

According to these records, the farm workers were almost fully employed in the year preceding the interviews (fig. 4). Male heads of households worked during 42 of the 48 weeks; their time was about evenly divided between farm and nonfarm work (table 3). They were not employed for an average of 6 weeks, but in only 2 of these weeks were they looking for work. Sons over 16 worked an average of 36 of the 48 weeks, mainly at nonfarm work. They spent an average of 11 weeks in school and 1 week looking for work.

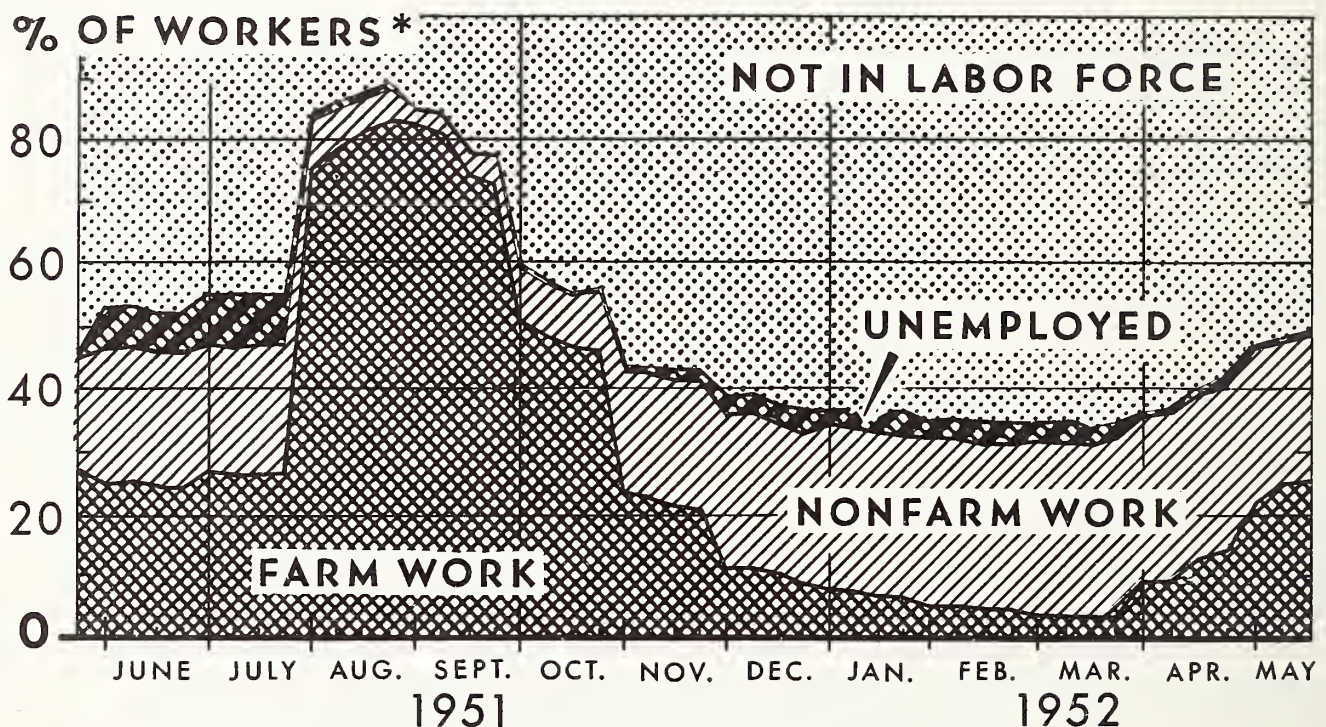
Female heads of households worked an average of only 30 weeks, but they spent an average of 14 weeks keeping house at home. They reported an average of 4 weeks when they were not working and were not keeping house, but only 1 week when they were looking for work. Wives averaged only 21 weeks of work, but they spent an average of 25 weeks keeping house. They spent an average of 2 weeks looking for work. Major employment of women who were heads of households was nonfarm work, whereas wives more frequently engaged in seasonal farm jobs. Daughters 16 and over worked approximately the same length of time as wives, and also mainly at farm work. They reported an average of 5 weeks of no work, in 2 of which they looked for work.

^{8/} See pp. 36 and 147 of the citation given in footnote 2, p.13.

In Cordele, Georgia

FARM WAGE WORKERS

Distribution by Labor Force Status, May 1951-May 1952



*PERSONS IN THE SURVEY WHO DID FARM WAGE WORK AT ANY TIME DURING YEAR

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Figure 4.--Seasonal farm workers in Cordele either dropped out of the labor market or found nonfarm employment in the slack months of the year.

Table 3.- Average weeks employed and average weeks engaged in other activities in the 12 months preceding the interviews, farm workers, Cordele, Ga., May 1952 1/

Relationship to head of household	: Workers :		: Average weeks employed :		Average weeks at other activities					
	: reporting :		: Farm : Nonfarm :		Total : Looking : Keeping :		Total : for work : house :		Attending : Other :	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Total farm workers-----	354	23	14	9	25	1	10	12	2	
Male heads of households-----	41	42	22	20	6	2	1	0	3	
Female heads of households----	55	30	14	16	18	1	14	0	3	
Wives-----	77	21	13	8	27	2	25	0	<u>3/</u>	
Sons 16 and over-----	17	36	12	24	12	1	0	11	<u>3/</u>	
Daughters 16 and over-----	31	22	17	5	26	2	8	13	3	
Children under 16-----	87	10	10	<u>3/</u>	38	1	1	32	4	
Others-----	46	20	12	8	28	1	9	15	3	

1/ Generalized on basis of 12 months with 4 weeks each.

2/ Includes illness and not employed but not looking for work.

3/ Less than 0.5 week.

Children under 16 spent most of their time in school, but they worked for an average of 10 weeks, practically all at farm work. They reported that looking for work had been their major activity for an average of 1 week.

The amount of farm employment obtained by these workers varied greatly according to season. Only 4 to 5 percent of the entire group did any farm work in February and March (table 4). By May the proportion increased to 25 percent, by July to 27 percent, and by August to 80 percent. By December the proportion dropped to 10 percent. With such great fluctuation in farm employment, it is easy to see why male workers and female heads of households move rapidly toward nonfarm employment. A person who is responsible for the support of a family would find farm employment too seasonal to permit him to fulfill his obligations. But farm work is well adapted to wives and children, who move into the labor force only long enough to supplement the family income. 9/

Employment records show the seasonal shift between farm and nonfarm work. From November to July, approximately a fourth of the workers were employed at nonfarm jobs. In the cotton-picking season, however, only about 1 worker in 20 was still in nonfarm work. A small reduction in nonfarm employment also occurred in May in the cotton-chopping season.

The peak of unemployment apparently occurred in the June and July lay-by period, when 7 percent of the workers were without work. In August, September, and October, practically all workers were employed. From December through March, the proportion unemployed went up to 3 percent. In April and May, it dropped back to 1 percent. Most workers who reported unemployment in June and July did not do so in winter because they were busy in school or with household duties.

From December through May, almost two-thirds of the workers were out of the labor force. Most of them were either doing housework or attending school. 10/ At the peak of the harvest season, 12 percent of the workers were still out of the labor force. Apparently they were not available for work because of household duties, sickness, or other factors.

9/ Employment service officials at Cordele noted that wives and children of workers who obtained good paying jobs in defense or other nonfarm employment frequently dropped out of the farm labor market.

10/ There is a customary aspect to this situation that should not be ignored. Some wives return to their housework when the harvest season is over, and apparently they give little thought to other opportunities for work. Although they were counted as out of the labor force, this survey indicates that a significant proportion of them would be willing to do some additional farm or nonfarm work.

Table 4. - Labor force and employment status of farm workers in the 12 months preceding the interviews, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Bimonthly period	Proportion of all farm workers ^{1/}					
	Employed			Not employed		
	All work	Farm work	Nonfarm work	Total	Unemployed	Not in labor force
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
May 1951:						
Second half - - - - -	40	25	15	60	1	59
June 1951:						
First half - - - - -	47	25	22	53	7	46
Second half - - - - -	46	24	22	54	6	48
July 1951:						
First half - - - - -	47	27	20	53	7	46
Second half - - - - -	47	27	20	53	7	46
August 1951:						
First half - - - - -	84	77	7	16	^{2/}	16
Second half - - - - -	87	82	5	13	¹	12
September 1951:						
First half - - - - -	85	82	3	15	0	15
Second half - - - - -	78	74	4	22	0	22
October 1951:						
First half - - - - -	58	50	8	42	^{2/}	42
Second half - - - - -	55	46	9	45	^{2/}	45
November 1951:						
First half - - - - -	42	23	19	58	2	56
Second half - - - - -	41	21	20	59	2	57
December 1951:						
First half - - - - -	36	12	24	64	3	61
Second half - - - - -	34	10	24	66	3	63
January 1952:						
First half - - - - -	34	8	26	66	3	63
Second half - - - - -	34	8	26	66	3	63
February 1952:						
First half - - - - -	32	5	27	68	2	66
Second half - - - - -	32	5	27	68	3	65
March 1952:						
First half - - - - -	32	4	28	68	3	65
Second half - - - - -	32	3	29	68	3	65
April 1952:						
First half - - - - -	36	9	27	64	1	63
Second half - - - - -	40	14	26	60	1	59
May 1952:						
First half - - - - -	47	23	24	53	1	52

^{1/} All percentages on the basis of the 354 persons who did some farm work in the 12 months preceding the interviews.

^{2/} Less than 0.5 percent.

Intermittency of Employment

Although the farm workers in the survey group were almost completely employed while in the labor market, their employment was far from continuous. This is indicated by the number of jobs held, as well as the number of periods of continuous employment.

No record was taken of the number of nonfarm jobs these people had, but they were asked how many different farm jobs they had held. The average number of farm jobs per worker during the year was 5.4. Workers who were employed for only 1 to 4 weeks had an average of 1.6 farm jobs, and those who worked 17 weeks or more had an average of 9.1 farm jobs.

In tabulating the employment records of these workers, their work year was divided into "periods of employment" - continuous periods when they were engaged in one type of work, although not necessarily for the same employer. Some workers had only one period of employment, which ordinarily was all or part of the cotton-harvest season. Other common periods of employment were in cotton chopping and nonfarm work. The 354 workers had an average of 2.6 periods of employment (table 5). Those who worked 17 weeks or more averaged close to 4 periods, whereas those who worked a shorter time averaged around 2.

Two-thirds of the workers had periods between jobs when they were not working (table 6). During these periods they might drop out of the labor market entirely, or they might be looking for work. Workers commonly experienced 1 or 2 periods of no work, but some experienced 3 or more. Three-fourths of the wives and children, but only a fifth of the male heads of households and sons 16 and over, had periods of no work. Of those workers who did farm work only, 82 percent had periods of no work, as compared with 26 percent of those who did mostly nonfarm work. Apparently the possibility of shifting between farm and nonfarm employment reduced the frequency of periods of no work.

Only a few of the periods of no work were actual periods of unemployment. The proportion was reduced by the fact that women usually left the labor market when seasonal work was over. Only 6 percent of the female heads of households and 9 percent of the wives stated that they had been unemployed. The proportion of male heads of households and sons 16 and over who had been unemployed were 19 and 18 percent, respectively.

Most of the workers who were unemployed at some time during the year reported from 5 to 8 weeks of unemployment. A few were unemployed for only 1 to 4 weeks, and a few others for 25 weeks or more. Workers who had the longest periods of unemployment were female heads of households and wives who did farm work only, and who did not report going into housework when seasonal work peaks were over.

Table 5.- Number of periods of employment and number of farm jobs per farm worker interviewed, by length of employment, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Workers by length of employment	:	Total workers	:	Periods of employ- ment 1/	:	Average :periods of employment :per worker	:	Total farm jobs 1/	:	Average farm jobs per worker
	:	<u>Number</u>	:	<u>Number</u>	:	<u>Number</u>	:	<u>Number</u>	:	<u>Number</u>
All workers-----	:	354	:	905	:	2.6	:	1,898	:	5.4
Length of employ- ment:	:		:		:		:		:	
1-4 weeks-----	:	45	:	79	:	1.8	:	74	:	1.6
5-16 weeks-----	:	206	:	429	:	2.1	:	882	:	4.3
17 weeks or more:	:	103	:	397	:	3.9	:	942	:	9.1

1/ A "period of employment" refers to a period of continuous employment at a specified activity, regardless of the number of employers worked for. A "job" refers to continuous activity for a single employer.

Length of Employment at Selected Operations

The 354 workers in the survey group reported that they engaged in a total of 690 different periods of farm employment (table 7). The work done in almost half of these periods was picking cotton; in almost a fourth of the periods it was chopping cotton. The next most frequently reported operation was harvesting peanuts. Almost a tenth of the workers reported this activity. An additional tenth reported that they worked in vegetables, fruits, and nuts (pecans).

Workers reported an average of 38 days of work in the cotton harvest. Cotton chopping provided an average of 14 days of work. The two together indicate a total of 52 days of work in cotton operations for those who did both chopping and picking.

The peanut harvest afforded an average of 20 days of work; the harvesting of miscellaneous vegetable and fruit crops provided an average of 25 days. As indicated in figure 1, the timing of some of these operations was such as to permit workers to engage in them as well as in the cotton harvest.

Method of Obtaining Jobs

As previously indicated, the crew-leader system is highly developed in the Cordele area. Thirty-five percent of the workers had obtained their farm jobs through crew leaders (table 8). Approximately a fourth had been approached directly by employers, while another fourth had continuing working relationships with individual farmers. Crew leaders had a more important role in the case of jobs that were located outside the county. Almost half the workers who took jobs outside the county obtained them through crew leaders. Next most common method of obtaining out-of-county employment was through friends or relatives.

Employment in the 2 Weeks Preceding the Interviews

Farm workers cannot utilize all their time at farm work, even in periods of employment. The work may be interrupted because of adverse weather, the condition of the crop, and other circumstances beyond the control of the worker. Personal reasons for not working are also common. As an indication of this type of underutilization, all workers who did any farm work in the 2 weeks preceding the interviews were asked to give detailed records of their employment.

Approximately a fourth had done some farm work in the 2 weeks preceding the interviews (table 9). Cotton chopping was just beginning, and workers were just moving into the labor force. As indicated in table 4, about a

Table 7.- Average length of employment of farm workers at specific farm operations in the year preceding the interviews, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Crop and operation	Total reports	Average days per operation
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
All crops and operations-----	690	30
Cotton-----	497	---
Planting and cultivation-----	9	41
Chopping-----	167	14
Harvest-----	321	38
Vegetables, fruits, nuts-----	68	---
Cultivation-----	4	23
Harvest-----	64	25
Peanuts-----	63	---
Cultivation-----	2	16
Harvest-----	61	20
Other and not reported-----	62	42

Table 8.- Method of obtaining jobs by farm workers in the 12 months preceding the interviews, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

	:	All jobs			:
	:				:
Method of recruitment	:	:	In	: Outside	: Farm jobs
	:	Total	: home	: home	:
	:		: county	: county	:
	:	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
	:				
All jobs-----	:	100	100	100	100
	:				
Crew leader-----	:	27	25	45	35
Solicited by employer----	:	22	23	13	25
Previous contact-----	:	21	23	3	22
Friend or relative-----	:	17	16	24	13
Personal search-----	:	10	10	10	3
Other-----	:	3	3	5	2
	:				
	:				

Table 9.- Employment of farm workers at farm jobs in the 2 weeks preceding the interviews, by position in household and type of worker, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Position in household and length of employment	Total : Farm workers who : All who : Percentage of those who		farm : did farm work in : worked in : worked in preceding 2 weeks		workers: preceding : preceding : who were employed for--		: 1-7 : 8-9 : 10 days		: days : days : or more	
	: Number : Number : Percent		: Number : Number : Percent		: Number : Number : Percent		: Number : Number : Percent		: Number : Number : Percent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total farm workers-----	354		90	25	100		28	28	44	
Position in household:										
Male heads of households-----	41		17	41	100		17	0	83	
Female heads of households-----	55		17	31	100		35	42	23	
Wives-----	77		25	32	100		16	44	40	
Sons 16 and over-----	17		2	12	100		0	0	100	
Daughters 16 and over-----	31		9	29	100		0	45	55	
Children under 16-----	87		11	13	100		69	0	31	
Others-----	46		9	20	100		45	35	20	
Length of employment:										
1-4 weeks-----	45		4	9	100		100	0	0	
5-16 weeks-----	206		24	12	100		50	25	25	
17 weeks or more-----	103		62	60	100		15	32	53	

fifth of the workers were engaged in nonfarm work and more than half were still out of the labor market during the 2-week period. Of those who did any work in the 2 weeks, a third worked 10 days, an additional 10 percent worked more than 10 days, 10 percent worked 9 days, and 15 percent worked 8 days.

If 5 days a week is regarded as a full workweek, the 90 workers who were employed at some time in the 2 weeks should have had a total of 900 days of employment. Only 175 days of work were reported. This means a loss of more than 20 percent of the worktime of these workers.

Actually, 37 percent of the adult male workers worked more than 5 days a week, while adult women usually worked either 4 or 5 days. Children ordinarily worked from 1 to 5 days.

Wage Rates

Workers in the survey group ordinarily were paid for farm jobs on either a piece-rate or day-rate basis. Harvest operations in cotton, peanuts, pecans, and most other crops were paid for on a piece-rate basis. Cotton chopping and other preharvest operations were paid for on a per day basis. The most commonly reported rate for picking cotton was \$3 per 100 pounds. A few workers reported rates as low as \$2, whereas others said they received \$4 or more (table 10). The day rate most commonly reported was \$3, although some workers reported a rate as low as \$2. Others, who were apparently skilled or semiskilled workers, said they received from \$4 to \$6 a day.

On nonfarm jobs, the workers usually were paid on a weekly or daily basis. Weekly rates were particularly common in domestic service work. The most frequent rate for this type of work was \$10 a week (table 11). Day rates for other jobs were only slightly higher - from \$1.50 to \$2.50 a day.

A comparison of time rates for farm work and for nonfarm work indicates why workers shifted so readily to farm work. They were able to earn approximately \$1 a day more at farm work, a gain of around 50 percent.

Earnings in the 12 Months Preceding the Interviews

The average amount earned by all workers in the survey in the 12 months preceding the interviews was \$472. Of this, 70 percent was earned at farm work and the rest at nonfarm work (table 12). This low figure results from the large number of women and children in the group. Male heads of

Table 10.- Wage rates received by farm workers on farm jobs in the
12 months preceding the interviews, Cordele, Ga.,
May 1952

Crop and rate	Reports		
	All operations	Preharvest and other operations	Har- vest operations
	Number	Number	Number
All crops-----	690	228	462
Cotton-----	497	176	321
Rate per cwt.-----	317	---	317
Under \$3.00-----	23	---	23
\$3.00-----	178	---	178
\$3.25-----	8	---	8
\$3.50-----	65	---	65
Over \$3.50-----	43	---	43
Rate per day-----	171	170	1
\$1.00 to \$1.99-----	2	2	0
\$2.00 to \$2.99-----	37	37	0
\$3.00 to \$3.99-----	129	128	1
\$4.00 and over-----	3	3	0
Other rates-----	9	6	3
Other crops-----	193	52	141
Piece rates-----	100	0	100
Day rates-----	82	41	41
\$2.00 to \$2.99-----	29	12	17
\$3.00 to \$3.99-----	46	25	21
\$4.00 to \$4.99-----	1	0	1
\$5.00 and over-----	6	4	2
Other rates-----	11	11	0

Table 11. - Wage rates on a time basis received by farm workers in the 12 months preceding the interviews, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Wage rate	: Total reports : of time rates :	:	Type of job			
			Farm		Nonfarm	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total reports of time rates:	:	:	464	100	270	100
Monthly rate:	:	:	6	1	6	2
Under \$100-----	:	:	6	1	6	2
Weekly rate:	:	:	92	20	0	0
Under \$10-----	:	:	14	3	0	0
\$10 to \$19-----	:	:	61	13	0	0
\$20 to \$29-----	:	:	9	2	0	0
\$30 and over-----	:	:	8	2	0	0
Daily rate:	:	:	320	69	253	94
\$1.00 to \$1.99-----	:	:	22	5	2	1
\$2.00 to \$2.99-----	:	:	88	19	66	24
\$3.00 to \$3.99-----	:	:	185	40	175	65
\$4.00 and over-----	:	:	25	5	10	4
Hourly rate:	:	:	46	10	11	4
\$0.25 to \$0.49-----	:	:	8	2	0	0
\$0.50 to \$0.74-----	:	:	14	3	0	0
\$0.75 to \$0.99-----	:	:	18	4	5	2
\$1.00 and over-----	:	:	6	1	6	2

Table 12.- Average earnings by farm workers in the 12 months preceding the interviews, by position to head of household and length of employment, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Position in household and length of employment	Average earnings in preceding 12 months			Proportion from farm work
	All work	Farm work	Nonfarm work	
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Percent
All farm workers-----	472	331	144	70
Position in household:				
Male heads of households----	1,157	691	459	60
Female heads of households--	473	326	151	69
Wives-----	395	318	81	81
Sons 16 and over-----	826	332	509	40
Daughters 16 and over-----	452	403	56	89
Children under 16-----	175	172	5	98
Others-----	434	289	145	67
Length of employment:				
1-4 weeks-----	194	79	115	41
5-16 weeks-----	399	237	162	59
17 weeks or more-----	740	630	110	85

households earned an average of \$1,157, of which 60 percent was from farm work. Earnings of female heads of households closely approximated earnings for the group as a whole, both as to amount and proportion from farm work.

Wives earned an average of \$395, of which 80 percent was from farm work. Sons 16 and over earned \$826, of which only 40 percent was from farm work. Their nonfarm earnings averaged higher than those of any other household group. At the other extreme, in point of nonfarm earnings, were daughters 16 and over, and children under 16. Approximately 90 percent of the \$452 earned by daughters over 16 was from farm work, as was 98 percent of the \$175 earned by children under 16.

Workers who were employed at farm work for more than 17 weeks were predominantly agricultural. Eighty-five percent of their earnings were from farm work, as compared with around half the earnings of workers who did farm work for a shorter time.

When earnings were calculated on a per day basis, they averaged \$4.80 a day at farm work and \$3.95 a day for nonfarm employment (table 13). Farm workers in practically every household status averaged higher earnings per day at farm work, as compared with nonfarm work. The greatest difference was in the earnings of wives, who averaged \$4.85 a day at farm work, as compared with only \$2.45 at nonfarm work.

Approximately half of all reports of earnings were between \$2 and \$4 a day - 52 percent of the reports of farm earnings and 43 percent of the reports of nonfarm earnings. Twenty percent of the reports of nonfarm earnings were below this rate, however, as compared with only 4 percent of the reports of farm earnings. High earnings per day were more frequent at farm jobs; 27 percent were for \$6 or more a day, as compared with 18 percent of the nonfarm jobs.

At farm work, earnings of less than \$2 a day were common only among children under 16. At nonfarm work, earnings of this level were also common among female heads of households, wives, and daughters 16 and over. Half of the female heads of households and wives earned less than \$4 a day at farm work, as compared with 90 percent at nonfarm work.

The earning power of adult males was high at both farm and nonfarm work. Almost half of the male heads of households made \$6 or more a day at farm work. They did about as well at nonfarm work; 38 percent made \$6 or more a day. Sons 16 and over also had earnings that ranged up to \$6 and \$8 per day, either in farm or in nonfarm employment.

Table 13. - Earnings per day from farm and nonfarm work, by farm workers, in the 12 months preceding the interviews, by position in household and length of farm employment, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

FARM WORK

Position in household and length of farm employment	Total reports	Earnings per day						Average earnings per day
		\$0.01	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$6.00	\$8.00		
		to	to	to	to	and		
		\$1.99	\$3.99	\$5.99	\$7.99	over		
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Dollars
Total reports-----	690	100	4	52	17	15	12	4.80
Position in household:								
Male heads of house-								
holds-----	92	100	0	43	9	12	36	6.35
Female heads of								
households-----	111	100	3	49	26	16	6	4.60
Wives-----	151	100	1	49	22	22	6	4.85
Sons 16 and over-----	27	100	0	37	30	11	22	5.75
Daughters 16 and over--	71	100	1	58	11	13	17	5.00
Children under 16-----	145	100	14	60	15	8	3	3.70
Others-----	93	100	5	57	10	15	13	4.60
Length of farm employ-								
ment:								
1-4 weeks-----	50	100	16	36	22	12	14	4.80
5-16 weeks-----	299	100	6	42	23	19	10	4.90
17 weeks or more-----	341	100	1	63	11	11	14	4.70

NONFARM WORK

Total reports-----	215	100	20	43	19	10	8	3.95
Position in household:								
Male heads of house-								
holds-----	50	100	0	16	46	24	14	6.00
Female heads of								
households-----	60	100	37	53	3	2	5	2.70
Wives-----	38	100	37	55	5	0	3	2.45
Sons 16 and over-----	23	100	0	35	39	13	13	5.05
Daughters 16 and over--	17	100	29	65	0	0	6	2.80
Others <u>1/</u> -----	27	100	11	45	15	22	7	4.65

1/ Include 3 children under 16 years of age.

Total earnings for the year divided by average earnings per day 11/¹¹ provides a rough approximation as to the number of days worked in the year. On this basis, all workers in the survey had an average of 108 days of farm and nonfarm work; male heads of households averaged 187 days and other workers, 97.

Availability for Additional Work

All workers from 16 to 60 years of age were asked how many months they expected to be employed at farm or nonfarm work in the coming year. Those who said they expected to work less than 10 months were asked whether they would be available for additional employment and, if so, when and at what kind of work.

A total of 241 workers were questioned - 63 males and 178 females (table 14). Only 14 male and 105 female workers said they expected less than 10 months' work. An additional 10 percent were unable to say whether or not they would have 10 months of work. Expectations for work in the coming year generally were in line with employment experience in the preceding year.

Answers in regard to availability for other work were somewhat surprising, in that they indicated greater availability in spring and summer (table 15). But availability was only a little less in fall and winter. In one way this is understandable. Persons with less than 10 months' employment were mainly housewives. Often they did not consider themselves available for additional work in winter. But was the reason for their answers actually nonavailability? Or did they believe that there was less opportunity to work in winter and therefore no reason to indicate availability.

If it is assumed that the questions were interpreted correctly, then 57 of 119 workers, or around 50 percent, were available for additional employment at various periods of the year. Greatest availability was from April through September. Heads of households indicated somewhat more availability in the slack season, but they constituted only a small fraction of the group.

11/¹¹ The average-earnings-per-day figure used here is not an exact average for each day worked; it is a weighted average of the reported daily earnings for each period of employment. Furthermore, worker estimates of earnings per day are frequently high. Hence, the derived figure on days worked may be somewhat low.

Table 14. - Farm workers 16 to 60 years of age who expected less than 10 months of work and who would be available for additional work in the year following the interviews, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

	:	:	:	: Workers who would be		
	:	: Workers	: Workers who ex-	: available for additional		
Sex and relationship	:	: 16-60	: pected less than:	Local	: Local	: Nonlocal
to head of household	:	: years	: 10 months of	: farm	: nonfarm:	: farm
	:	: of age	: work	: work	: work	: work
<hr/>						
	:	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
	:					<u>Number</u>
All workers-----	:	241	119	49	54	67
	:					9
Males-----	:	63	14	22	4	7
	:					1
Heads of	:					
households-----	:	39	5	13	3	2
	:					1
Others-----	:	24	9	38	1	5
	:					0
Females-----	:	178	105	59	50	60
	:					8
Heads of	:					
households-----	:	54	22	41	9	13
	:					2
Others-----	:	124	83	67	41	47
	:					6

Table 15.- Quarters in which farm workers expect to be available for off-season work in the year following the interviews, by type of work and type of worker, Cordele, Ga., May 1952

Type of work and type of worker	Workers who expect to be available in--			
	January- March	April- June	July- September	October- December
	Number	Number	Number	Number
All types of work-----	45	55	57	46
Heads of households-----	14	11	10	12
Nonheads of households-----	31	44	47	34
:				
Farm work only-----	5	6	10	7
Heads of households-----	2	2	1	1
Nonheads of households-----	3	4	9	6
:				
Nonfarm work only-----	21	24	22	18
Heads of households-----	8	5	4	5
Nonheads of households-----	13	19	18	13
:				
Either farm or nonfarm work--	19	25	25	21
Heads of households-----	4	4	5	6
Nonheads of households-----	15	21	20	15

More workers said they would be available for nonfarm than for farm employment. Availability for farm work away from home was particularly low. Only 9 workers - 1 male and 8 female - indicated such availability. This may not be surprising in view of the fact that only 1 worker in the survey group had any experience in migratory farm work.

Terms Used

Terms used in analyzing the data from Georgia vary slightly from those used in the other reports in this series. They may be listed as follows:

Farm worker -- A person who did any farm work for wages in the 12 months preceding the interviews.

Job -- A continuous period of employment for one employer.

Labor force -- All persons at work or available for work. Does not include persons voluntarily idle, engaged in housework in their own homes, in school, or unable to work.

Partial employment or underemployment -- Employment for less than 6 hours a day or 5 days a week.

Period not at work -- A continuous period in which worker was idle for any reason except school attendance or illness.

Periods of employment -- A continuous period of employment at one operation in one area, regardless of changes in employers.

Unemployed -- Not at work but available for work. Both those persons who were looking for work, and those who wanted work but believed that none was available, were classified as unemployed.

